

ER 10-5358/a

21 JUL 1958

cancel

Colonel Harris B. Bell, USAF
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
Pacific Air Force
APO 953
San Francisco, California

Dear Harris:

Thanks very much for your kind letter of
congratulations. It was most thoughtful of you
to wish me well on this occasion.

I appreciated your sending me Colonel
Mahon's report, and have forwarded it to the people
here who have an interest.

Jacklyn joins me in kindest regards,

Sincerely,

SIGNED / Puri
C. P. Cabell
General, USAF

O/DCI/kp

Distribution:

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1 - DDCI (w/basic)

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P.S. And don't forget Harris, you've
helped me over the years and in
many jobs. I find Mahon's report
extremely interesting.

USAF review(s) completed.

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE *USAF*)

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Approved For Release 2003/08/26 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001200040047-6

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HEADQUARTERS
THIRTEENTH AIR FORCE
United States Air Force
APO 74
San Francisco, California

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Att to 10-5257
AWD/Tru
ER

13IDC

23 June 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL MOORMAN:

SUBJECT: (U) VISIT OF COL JAMES E. MAHON, DCS/I, 13AF TO
DJAKARTA

Following are additional items summarizing conversations held or impressions gained during my visit to Djakarta 11-16 June.

1. I arrived Djakarta 11 June "under wraps." I was requested not to identify myself with 13AF or Clark Air Base. On 12 June it was suggested to Ambassador Jones that the situation thus created was awkward, possibly naive, and likely to be unproductive. His response in effect was: "It is time we change our approach. Put on your uniform, tell everybody who you are, from where you come, and why you are here. And by all means call on Surydarma and Siswadi." From that point on the visit was much more satisfactory.

2. The unanimous opinion [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] is that substantial hope for the realization of US national objectives in Indonesia lies in support of Nasution and his program. Ambassador Jones and DCM Cottrell gave detailed exposition of their thinking on this point which can be summarized as follows. Nasution does and has been encouraged to think of influencing the re-orientation and re-habilitation of the Djakarta Government in three phases:

- a. Bring to an end the formal fighting with the Rebels,
- b. Effect desirable changes in the manning of the cabinet and other key posts.
- c. Apply whatever pressures or use whatever measures are necessary to neutralize the effectiveness of or destroy the Communist Party of Indonesia. (PKI).

It is anticipated that phase one will be accomplished by the end of June 1958. It is hoped that the first major step in the accomplishment of phase two may be undertaken by 17 August, which is Indonesian Independence Day. It is recognized that the accomplishment of the third phase may take a long time, and that phases two and

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three may be pursued concurrently. In this context it may be interesting to note that certain Indonesian military men reckon that it may require from two to five years of guerrilla type fighting completely to eliminate the influence of the Rebels after a formal ceasefire has been achieved. (See paragraphs 7e and 8 below). Obviously, it will be to the PKI interest to keep the Rebels and the GOI forces apart, and they are expected to attempt to do so. With regard to a reconciliation between GOI and Rebel leaders, I gained the impression that the Nasution group would be willing to do so, but at the moment doubt that the Rebels would.

The Jones-Cottrell thesis, which I was told had been communicated to the State Department, is that the US should be prepared to react quickly with tangible substance in what may be a slowly evolving situation. This assistance to be on the call of the US Embassy when the Indonesian leadership has demonstrated satisfactory accomplishment of each phase. They estimate that the first requirement will be for sufficient small arms and ammunition to re-equip the Indonesian Army when it is ready to redeploy from the outer islands and consolidate itself as a major counter-poise to the growing Communist strength in Java. Subsequently, there will be a real requirement for shipping, civil and military air to include both hardware and facilities, and a greatly improved communications capability. Cottrell and Jones realize that this is a large order, and that it presages a long term expensive country program, but they submit that the potential gain is worth the investment. They emphasize that at least at the outset we cannot too strongly or obviously direct the Indonesians in their program, but that we must lead by indirection. They are optimistic that this can be accomplished.

3. Ambassador Jones' personal assessment of Sukarno: "He will tolerate a force or entity only so long as it is personally useful to him. Up to now he has believed that he can move down the middle of the road towards an 'active independent foreign policy,' carrying the Army in his right hand and carrying the PKI in his left, balancing them against each other and using both to his advantage. Recently, however, with the Army dispersed and fighting in the outer islands, and with the PKI beginning to show signs of insolence and disobedience, he is coming to regard the PKI as a net threat. He may be expected soon to take steps to dissipate their strength by causing the formation of another leftist political party built around the nucleus of a group of Trotskyite Communists who reportedly detest the PKI as much as they do anybody.

Ambassador Jones feels that although the myth of Sukarno's ability to unify the people may be stretched a little bit, as witnessed in the great lack of unity between them at the moment, he still feels that he probably has the greatest ability of any Indonesian to bring a large number of people together on a given issue at a given time. This stems not from any astuteness in statecraft, but simply from his ability as a spell-binding orator.

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Reference the myth of Sukarno leadership: Where we have from time to time been led to believe that Sukarno was not only the political but also the great moral and spiritual leader of the masses, who would spontaneously rise up in his support, a report by Americans on the spot indicates otherwise. At the time of the recent abortive bombing attempt on his life, it is said that for about six hours, while it was believed that "The Bung" had been killed, the Indon in the street was completely apathetic. It seems that while he is in close contact, Sukarno's personal magnetism is well nigh irresistible, even to his enemies, but there is no real love for him among the people.

4. Ambassador Jones, and other key Embassy personnel, reference Air Vice Marshal Surydarma, Chief of Staff Indonesian Air Force: Surydarma is a comparatively weak man, not respected professionally by his officers, who owes his continued existence entirely to the favor of Sukarno. His wife is recognized as an active Communist and is alleged to be one of the mistresses of Sukarno. Although he is undoubtedly strongly influenced politically by his wife, his own actions ostensibly favoring Communist programs, and his actions in the acquisition of Communist aircraft and equipment probably stem also from the fact that up to now he has been neglected and to his thinking spurned by leading Western airmen. In response to my question, reference the efficacy of planting in Surydarma's mind the idea of inviting Generals Kuter and Moorman to visit the Indonesian Air Force, Jones said that if Surydarma could demonstrate to his countrymen that he, like Nasution, could have some attention by leading Western opposite numbers, it would have such an effect on his morale and ego that he could "be had" for whatever value it would serve to have him. Jones enthusiastically indorsed planting the idea.

5. Anticipating a barrage of questions from the Indons, reference Pope, Mahon requested guidance of the Ambassador in answering them. The guidance received in effect was: "We have no knowledge of nor responsibility for the actions of Pope. At your request the US Government took what steps it could to have Rebel air attacks stopped. They have stopped. If we are to make any progress towards a harmonious relationship between our two governments, we must look forward from there, not backward." Evidently this position had already been satisfactorily enunciated by the Embassy, because in subsequent conversations with Indonesians, I encountered no embarrassing questions nor accusations, but rather an indication of desire to forget about the whole business.

6. Lt Col Smith, US AirA, Djakarta, and I had a 45-minute visit with Surydarma in his office on 14 June in which the latter did most of the talking. He appeared somewhat ill at ease, he frequently giggled (a characteristic which has been observed in other Asians when they were nervous or embarrassed), and generally presented a

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picture consistent with the Ambassador's assessment of a weak man. He spent some time on meaningless amenities, and a discussion of his hobbies, which include hunting (wild boars, but not tigers), pistol shooting, and gardening, before he could be brought to any substantive discussion. When he did come around, he stated that he had already discussed in detail with Ambassador Jones those things required by the Indonesian Air Force which they would like to have from the US to make it an effective entity. In view of that, and much discussion which had gone on in the past, he doubted that a reiteration of the same points would be fruitful. At that point he would like to have some action rather than words. When he was reminded of action taken by the State Department on 20-21 May to issue Export Licenses on some \$1,300,000 worth of hard goods to Indonesia including \$283,000 worth of aircraft and electrical spare parts, he denied knowledge of the action. He stated that three recent cables to his AIRA and the Chief of his purchasing mission in the US had indicated to the contrary. Then evidently, in spite of his determination not to identify requirements, he complained about the difficulty of running an Air Force with inadequately trained staff personnel. He stated that their efforts to acquire training in the Staff Schools of India and the UK have been unsatisfactory, and in his belief, the only satisfactory arrangement would be to have USAF Staff Training.

He stated that as a military man, he had neither the time, the inclination, nor the prerogative to concern himself with politics. (The night before, his wife, as one of a supporting cast of four to Sukarno, had delivered a red rabble rousing speech in Surabaya against the testing of atomic or hydrogen bombs anywhere, against anyone, at any time).

At my suggestion that the best way for the problems of his Air Force to be appreciated by the USAF would be to invite some Senior US Airmen like General Kuter and General Moorman, for instance, to visit him, he said, "Yes, that would undoubtedly be a very good thing."

7. Following the conversation with Surydarma, Smith and I had a lengthy visit with Lt Col Siswadi, Intelligence Chief of the Indonesian Air Force, who is generally believed to be a Communist. I had met Siswadi the night of 12 June. When the introduction was begun, "This is Col Mahon," Siswadi interrupted with, "Oh, you mean the Deputy for Intelligence of the 13th Air Force." He exhibited a great deal of glibness and strength of purpose. The details of the conversation were recorded by Smith, and will be the subject of an Intelligence Report by him. The following is presented as a summary and review of highlights only:

a. Reference Pope: See message 13ODC, Cite TS-58-429.

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b. Reference Soviet aircraft acquisitions: He stated 15 Czech built two-place Trainer MIG-15 type aircraft received. At least two arrived Kemajoran Airport, Djakarta on 13 June. MIG-17 types on order, but not received. He did not know what model they would be. Six IL-14 type Transports received; flown in through China and Burma, more enroute; five IL-28 type Bombers received; arrived by surface transport; being assembled at Kemajoran. Some communications gear received; Czech technicians on hand.

c. Siswadi discussed the Air Order of Battle of both the Government and the Rebel Air Forces and their respective combat losses. He credited the Rebel Air Force with having had a total of eight B-26 aircraft, three of which had been destroyed, five of which were unaccounted for. He indicated the belief that the Rebels had at least one B-29 type Bomber. At this point, I stated:

(1) Categorically, that there are no B-29's in the Southwest Pacific - Southeast Asia Area.

(2) That there are some RB-50's used for Weather Reconnaissance based at Clark, but that none of these had been or would be remodified to bomber configuration.

d. Siswadi frankly and emphatically stated that the Indonesian Air Force is desperately in need of US built equipment and US training. He said they have committed \$63,000,000 of a \$100,000,000 budget to the purchase of Communist Bloc aircraft and support equipment. They would like to spend the remaining \$37,000,000 in the US, and if a way could be discovered to do so, would like to stop order on some of the undelivered Communist Bloc equipment and re-commit those funds to additional US purchases. They want, in the following priority, C-123 Transports, Search and Rescue Aircraft and equipment, Piston Engine Fighter Bombers and Light Bombers.

e. Siswadi indicated they wanted the Piston Engine Aircraft to continue the guerrilla warfare phase of fighting against the Rebels, which might take two more years.

f. When asked in what role they expected to employ their MIG Fighters, i.e., as air defense, ground support, or interceptor roles, he appeared puzzled for a minute and answered, "Why we will just use them as fighters." When asked what they expected to gain with their IL-28 Bombers, he said in effect, "Prestige."

g. When asked if he contemplated that the IL-28 would be used to bomb West Irian, he merely laughed and said he doubted West Irian would ever be bombed. At a suggestion that West Irian was probably much more valuable to the Indonesians as an issue on

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which to bring the people to an agreement than as a piece of real estate, he laughingly agreed that that was probably true.

h. At Smith's request to see and photograph the MIG's and IL-28's at Kemajoran, he simply said, "I'm afraid that that would not be permitted for a few days yet."

i. Like his boss Suryadarma, Siswadi volunteered the statement that he had no time for, nor interest in politics; but at slight urging, he gave a somewhat detailed description of Communist techniques and tactics for advancing their campaign in Indonesia by non-military means. He described the approach as a very simple one in which the Communists promised to each trade, labor, or regional agricultural group the things which that group wanted. He then advanced the belief that very shortly Sukarno might, as another experiment in Government, abolish all political parties in order "to stop political bickering."

j. In connection with Siswadi's strong plea for US equipment and training to include training for himself at a USAF Intelligence school, I repeated the suggestion that a visit by Generals Kuter and Moorman might be profitable to them. Siswadi agreed that this probably would be effective and was worth considering.

8. I had dinner with Brig Gen Gatot Subroto, Vice Chief of Staff, Indonesian Army, at his home on 13 June. Other persons present were Madame Subroto, an unidentified Army Lieutenant who acted as interpreter, and for a short time, Lt Colonel Andi Jusuf, who was represented as being the Commander of Over-all Military Operations in the Celebes, and two officers of his staff. General Subroto was very jovial and hospitable. He displayed an extremely colorful personality, describing himself as the George Patton of Indonesia. He stated that with no education and nothing to advance himself in a military career except a fighting heart, he often wondered how he ever got to be a General, but he had always been gratified to find that men would follow him in combat. He repeatedly assured that the Communists would never be able to take over in Indonesia, because if they ever became a serious threat, he and other fighting men like him would kill them all just as he had done at Madiun in 1948. He repeatedly reiterated his admiration of and praise for America, Americans and American things. He was enormously impressed by the hospitality he had recently received at CINCPAC's fire power demonstration. He took great pride in showing the "American" metal name plate which he had worn while attending the Meeting and a cigarette box which had been presented to him by Admiral Stump. He offered to take me anywhere in Indonesia I wanted to visit. I was impressed with his being just what he claimed to be - a forthright ego-centric, fighting man, strongly pro-American, strongly anti-Communist, whose personal friendship can probably be maintained at very little cost. Col Andi Jusuf appeared somewhat

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shy, but responsive to questions. He estimated the formal fighting would end by 30 June, but that guerrilla fighting might last" a long time. Maybe five years."

9. On 12 June, Major George Benson, Asst Army Attache, US, reported to me a conversation he had had with Major General Nasution, Chief of Staff, Indonesian Army. After having talked with a number of the key staff personnel, Hq Indonesian Army, during a reception on 11 June, Benson approached Nasution, with whom he is on very friendly and informal terms, and said, "After talking with some of your Chiefs, I believe that they are in sympathy with the Rebels." To which he reports Nasution as responding, "You think they are in sympathy with the Rebels? I am in sympathy with the Rebels! Many of them are personal friends of mine. We are both seeking the same objectives. Unfortunately, they have chosen to seek them from outside the Government. I, a loyal soldier, propose to seek them through the Government." Nasution is reported to have described two types of Indon military leaders: one, the progressive who wants to make a unified military force, and the other, the War Lord. He classified his group as progressive, and many of the Rebel Group as War Lords. A possible exception to the War Lord type among the Rebels is Colonel Kawilarang. He is reported to have been an intimate associate and the closest personal friend of Nasution for much of their lives. When he "defected" to the Rebels, Nasution was visibly deeply grieved for some days. Another occasion of Nasution grief, as opposed to anger, was the allegation of American aid to the Rebels.

10. During dinner with Ambassador Jones and DCM Cottrell on 14 June, and through the morning of 15 June, I reviewed my conversations with Indonesian personnel. Ambassador Jones was much interested in the assurances of no B-29's in the area, stating that he had been "put on the spot" the night before by Premier Djuanda with that question. I explained that the RB-50's at Clark and the P-4Y's of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force are the only four-engine aircraft in the theater of bomber external configuration and that neither of these could be used in bomber roles without major refitting.

11. The following conclusions and recommendations are offered:

a. The unanimity of opinion of the key personnel of the US Embassy in Djakarta is impressive. Although Ambassador Jones obviously makes full use of his Attaches, and is very capably assisted by his DCM Cottrell, he is without question an effective team captain and leader, who is highly respected, not only by his own people, but by the Indonesians. His support of my visit, and his attitude on visits by General Kuter and yourself indicate that we can expect a high degree of cooperation from him in the future. The key members of the Embassy

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were convinced that they are following the right approach. I found their confidence contagious, and recommend that Ambassador Jones' proposals be given serious consideration in whatever echelons of our national structure is appropriate.

b. The statements of General Subroto can probably be taken at face value; those of Suryardarma should be considered with caution; and those of Siswadi must be regarded with suspicion.

c. Based as much on hunch as on the spoken word, I will be surprised if Suryardarma does not at least attempt to have General Kuter and yourself visit the Indonesian Air Force. If this materializes, you should not "come to explore the situation," but be prepared to discuss things which can be done to satisfy some of the AURI requirements for US assistance. In this sense, it is evident that the United States has realized enormous gain through the efforts of the US Army with the Indonesian Army. The opinion was stated on all sides in the US Embassy, Djakarta, that the Indonesian Army had saved the day for the US in the past few weeks, and they attribute it to the influence of a comparatively small group of key army personnel (the self-styled Eisenhower boys) who take great pride in having been trained at Fort Benning, Fort Leavenworth, and other US Army Schools. If the USAF can find ways to accommodate some of the desires of the Indonesian Air Force for USAF training and equipment, it is not improbable that some similar benefits may accrue to that effort.

Signed: James E. Mahon
Typed: JAMES E. MAHON
Colonel, USAF
DCS/Intelligence

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